

stated that there is no place for Türkiye in the EU unless it undergoes a drastic change. As for the last chapter, Baracani presents a general summary of the book and concludes the text.

This book, which analyzes the EU's foreign policy between the years 2014-2019 and its relations with Türkiye, contains positive aspects as well as some difficulties and limitations. The work offers rich content on EU foreign policy, with an institutional perspective on the EU. In this sense, it is an important

resource for researchers in terms of the structure and functioning of EU institutions, EU law, EU policy and foreign policy, and the EU in the axis of international politics. However, since the book deals with the circumstances from a Eurocentric perspective, the approaches and interpretations are made from a purely European perspective. This approach, unfortunately, ignored Turkey's stance and determination in the EU-Türkiye relationship and demonstrated Türkiye as a one-sided problem in the EU-Türkiye relations.

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## Imperial Resilience: The Great War's End, Ottoman Longevity, and Incidental Nations

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By Hasan Kayalı

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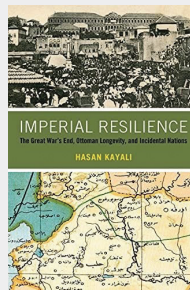
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Reviewed by Mustafa İltır, Independent Researcher

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Could WWI and its aftermath be considered as the ultimate turning point that historically disentangled Arabs from Ottoman integrity? In other words, was WWI alone responsible for the entire separation of Arabs from their Turkish counterparts? Moreover, can the classical nation-state paradigm explain the overall aspects of the emerging Arab states? As one of the most influential experts regarding the Turco-Arab relations during the late Ottoman and early Republican periods, Hasan Kayalı asks these fundamental questions pertaining to the disengagement between Arabs and Turks in his recent book titled *Imperial Resilience: The Great War's End, Ottoman Longevity, and Incidental Nations*.

It must be born in mind before anything else that the author skillfully demonstrates the



theoretical and conceptual background as to why he attempted to write on this subject. Throughout the book, he adeptly follows the theoretical ideas he already elaborated in the preface and introduction regarding the nation-state. Challenging the widely held notion within the literature, that the nation-state paradigm has been influential, he endeavors to “eschew nation-state centric designations, since the book’s purpose is to bring to light the flux and contestation that surrounded the crystallization of the familiar political entities” (p. 16). Rather than falling into the classical trap of so-called paradigms that allows for the teleologic explanation regarding the historical flow, Kayalı successfully overcomes the theoretical fallacy on which the literature has long been based. For him, “nation-state along the fault line of 1918 has

privileged the utilization of such terminology as ‘national struggle,’ which affirms the teleology of nationness in the Middle East. It ignores the flux and anguish of a search for political identity at a crucial juncture in the region’s history” (p. 7). Rather than grand narratives about certain paradigms like modernization or nation-state, he often stresses the significance of historical flux, conflicts, contestations, and agencies that history built upon politically. This not only shows the extent to which the book provides a strong theoretical background but also the scope of its contribution to a new direction within the literature.

Moreover, the author defined 1918-1923 as a liminal period between empires and nation-states. Another theoretical contribution of the author stems from his idealization of liminality regarding this periodization. For him, the five years after 1918 must not be considered as if referring to a process that gave birth to the nation-states which could ultimately be deterministic, but rather it must be considered as immanent to the Empires. In other words, the current literature often considers this period as if it was the labor pain of the nation-states. However, foreseeing the emergence of the nation-states even in 1918 would be a great teleological mistake, rather the liminal period of 1918-1923 must still be considered as a continuation of the Empires.

Apart from its theoretical contributions, the book also provides a considerable degree of empirical detail in the first five chapters. Following the analytical background, the chapters primarily concentrate on Anatolia, Syria, and Iraq geographically. Disintegration between the Ottoman state and the Southern Arabian Peninsula, with emerging effects of the post-Balkan Wars regarding the Turkification of the center, is Kayalı’s focus in chap-

ter 1. Yet, he also argues that Syria’s geopolitical position, located between Anatolia and the Arabian Peninsula, brought in a different approach by the center to Syrian provinces (p. 36). This is why he asserted that “wartime Syria became the rigorous and deliberate application of state processes” (p. 37). This not only emerged with an increasing level of state capacity and coercion through Syria but also with a certain degree of modernizing attempts. Moreover, the Ottoman center also focused on gaining popular support with Islamic propaganda (pp. 43-45). Chapter 2 begins with a descriptive analysis regarding the last year of the Great War, pointing out the transforming power balances between the two parties. Yet, the author primarily focuses on the Greater Syrian region including Palestine. Together with developments regarding the war, he always references the global effects –i.e., the Bolshevik Revolution that changed the course of the war with the American involvement against Germany (pp. 54-55). Attempts to reshape the new world order proposed by Lenin, Lloyd George, and Woodrow Wilson affected the attitudes of both internal and external dynamics within the Ottoman territories as well. Emerging Arab concerns regarding the failure of the Ottoman army seemed to be eased with Brest-Litovsk, yet the Ottoman Empire was going to lose Syrian territories during the Fall of 1918. An interesting observation in Kayalı’s book is that before the war ended the Arabs proposed that the Ottoman government should establish a federal state system within the Ottoman Empire (p. 81). This perspective could be seen throughout Kayalı’s book, as chapter 3 also points out a certain degree of collaboration between Turkish and Arab counterparts. Kayalı provides information regarding how the relations between Anatolia and Syria changed shape during 1919. As he pointed out, the existence of certain reports

mentions Turco-Arab relations for making a federation model: "... these reports alleged an agreement between Faysal and Mustafa Kemal as early as June 1919 toward the creation of a federation modeled on the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, in which Sharif Husayn would obtain a unitary Arab state and declare his allegiance to the Sultan-caliph" (p. 103). Chapter 4, on the other hand, chronologically concentrates on the period of 1920-1922. The growing power of the resistance in the southern Anatolia region against "France as the common adversary in Anatolia and Syria" (p. 126), maintained the convergence to a certain level. However as discussed in chapter 5, during the imperial resolution post-1922, arrangements between France and Ankara forced Mustafa Kemal to focus on the Northern Mesopotamian region with the Armistice of Mudanya. Mustafa Kemal endeavored to have control of Mosul and the Sulaymaniyah region, even sending "religious propagandists to the border regions." (p. 148). The Lausanne Conference did not provide a solution regarding Mosul and Alexandretta, yet it gave Syrians hope that they could elude

French semi-colonial rule. As pointed out by the author: "Türkiye's ability to ward off occupation with military success and engage in peace negotiations with the Great Powers made a deep impression in Syria. Placards posted in the streets of Aleppo declared that the mandate of no country other than Türkiye could be accepted." (p. 165).

It could therefore be concluded that the author has made a significant contribution to the literature in this area. One of the ultimate matters the book makes the reader reconsider is that one cannot think of the Anatolian independence struggle independently of Syria and Iraq, an approach that has often been ignored by the literature. Moreover, it is important to consider this period as the continuation of the Empire, rather than a nationalist split. As the author asserts, it may be more appropriate to look for the origins of the nationalist disintegration only after the 1930s (p. 182). Therefore, it makes an important contribution to the literature in terms of positioning beyond the determinant boundaries of classical nationalist literature.